Mr. P. Krishna Menon.—Now, with regard to the question of the removal of the College I am one of the persons who advocated against the idea of the removal of the College from here. My Hon'ble friend from Trichur is yet to know what exactly is the reason that prompted us to oppose the removal and what exactly are the considerations that we are taking into account in suggesting or investigating the possibility or the feasibility of its retention in Ernakulam. It is not because that Trichur has not got 500 acres of waste land. It is not because that we have got 500 acres of waste land in Ernakulam. I may tell my Hon'ble friend that there is not an inch of waste land in Ernakulam. He may be proud of the 500 acres of waste land in Trichur.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—Sir, on a point of order. The discussion is not regarding the removal of the College. It is not the part of the resolution taken up now.

Mr. P. Krishna Menon.—I do not want to dwell upon it, Sir. It is simply to show that I have many replies to these attacks which are delivered from behind and hitting below the belt, according to his own words.

In the face of the facts mentioned by the Honourable Secretary I do not want to press the motion.

The resolution was, therefore withdrawn with the leave of the House.

8. Imposition on Forest Exclusions.

Mr. A. Eachara Menon.—Mr. President, Sir, the subject-matter of this resolution is not new to this Council. It is as old as the Council itself. I have been bringing it to the notice of the Diwan President in this Council every year and every time he was seen taking down notes. In the 1105 Budget Session he showed his sincerity and exhibited his surprise by interrupting me in my speech to enquire whether it was Rs. 2—8—0 per acre. On my replying 'yes' he took down notes with much avidity which made the onlookers think that the matter had gone home and would be seriously considered. But yet nothing was done. The fact of this rehearsal of 1105 was brought to his notice during the last Budget Session. Then also he was seen taking down notes. Six months have passed by since and nothing is heard to have been done. If I may, aposteriori, hazard the guess that he might have been pencilling a caricature of me and apostrophying to his production, 'O! you fool, where is justice to me when it is a matter of Rs., as., ps.? I do not think I will be accused of wanting a reason'. Whatever it be, we have to pay

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this high assessment now also. Hence it is, Sir, I have tabled this resolution which runs thus:—"This Council recommends to the Government that the imposition of Rs. 2—8—0 per acre on the forest exclusions now assigned is a heavy burden on the assignees and that it should therefore be reduced to the rate obtaining for the settled lands adjoining".

Sir, at the time of afforestation only such lands as were ill-suited for the cultivation of food grains were conserved. Then lands have now been disafforested and assigned away to various persons. These lands are high level lands with a soil full of rubbles and are situated in malarial regions. The classification during the settlement was in accordance with the physical features of the land—the lands in the malarial regions being placed a class lower than those in the non-malarial, the high level lands in a class lower than the low-lying and in varying classes according to their fertility, etc. The settled lands adjacent to the deforested lands and are in a lower level have accordingly been assessed at the rate of two to four annas per acre whereas the deforested lands are assessed at the uniform rate of Rs. 2—8—0 per acre. And the highest rate of assessment for parambas in Cochin State is only Rs. 2 per acre which is obtainable only in certain parts of the Chittur Taluk. Thus you will be pleased to find, Sir, that while low-lying fertile lands in non-malarial tracts, i.e., the best lands in the State are assessed only at the rate of Rs. 2 per acre according to the last settlement, the high level lands of inferior soil in the malarial regions are assessed at Rs. 2—8—0 per acre even though settled lands lying contiguous to these are assessed only at the rate of two to four annas. Can anything be more anomalous, Sir? Is it right? Is it just? The injustice of the impost had been expressly admitted by the leader of the House and still the Government did not find its way to right a wrong.

Mr. T. M. Krishna Menon.—Did I?

Mr. A. Eachara Menon.—Yes, you did. That you may recollect it, I shall give this cue. You said in reply to some sentiment I gave expression to that 'this is due to a judicial officer being in executive chair'.

Let us next consider, Sir, the hardships caused to the assignees. The highest rent they can expect to get from the assignments will be Rs. 4 per acre which is the rent they get from settled lands lying contiguous to these. The lowest price which the Government have fixed for these lands is Rs. 50 an acre. Without taking into consideration the amount that will have to be spent for bringing these lands under cultivation, calculating the interest at 6 per cent on the price alone, the assignee should have Rs. 3 towards interest and Rs. 2—8—0 towards assessment. Hence he should have Rs. 5—8—0 per

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acre whereas he gets only Rs. 4. This means he should find Rs. 1—8—0 from his other sources. Is this not hard, Sir? Is this moral? Is this the way you show your sympathy with the agriculturists? Sir, you have said in grand eloquent terms in the Administration Report of the last year that more lands were brought under cultivation and that about two square miles of disafforested lands were ready for assignment. Whereas you have shown in the Administration Report for the outsider to understand that you are trying your level best to make lands available for people to cultivate and prosper, what is the real state obtainable here? We have to pay Rs. 5—8—0 per acre of land from which we could expect only Rs. 4. Does this speak well of you, Sir? It may hoodwink the outsider who knows nothing of the real state of affairs.

Further, Sir, there is another aspect of the question. This is not a practical question. It is not a question affecting the disafforested area alone. It has a larger implication. It is an all-Cochin question. In this impending settlement it will affect all those who hold lands in Cochin. For, Sir, if we submit to this impost lying down we will be estopped from questioning in case the Settlement Officer fixes Rs. 2—8—0 per acre for the last class of lands—lands least fitted for cultivation and manipulate from it his figures for the higher classes. And you will be pleased to find, Sir, that it is only right and reasonable that lands, lying contiguous to the disafforested lands which pay an assessment of Rs. 2—8—0 per acre, are also made to pay a like sum even though they had been assessed hitherto only at the rate of two to four annas. It is only when the injustice of the incidence, which is about fifteen times the original, is considered that we are driven to bay and compelled to meet the question squarely and fairly. We have thus found that this impost of Rs. 2—8—0 per acre is unjust, immoral and fraught with far reaching consequences. With these few words I commend the resolution for the acceptance of the House.

Mr. A. S. Harihara Ayyar.—Sir, I second the resolution and want to bring to the notice of the Council that since this was not effected during the Settlement itself, this may be changed at any time and since the disafforestation took place only recently. Perhaps the then Diwan Peishkar thought it fit to put fancy prices and also fancy taxes. The uneducated classes the Koundans and so many others have gone in for the same. Now alone they have come to understand. So it is requested that the same may be rectified.

Mr. T. M. Krishna Menon.—I do not see the force of the complaint. These lands were sold after having been notified for

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sale. They were sold in auction, most of them, and before being assigned, their extent was shown and the assessment charged upon them was also pointed out. So, it was with due notice that these lands had been charged with an assessment of Rs. 2—8—0 per acre that these people purchased these lands at Rs. 50, Rs. 35 and Rs. 100 per acre. Now they have no right to say that the imposition of that tax is too much. We have not taken a comparative statement as to the yield of each tharam of land. But I consider that in Chittur the groundnut cultivation is very profitable.

Mr. A. Eachara Menon.—Not in disafforested areas.

Mr. T. M. Krishna Menon.—I cannot say that there is not justice in the present assessment. When they have purchased it for a particular amount they must have taken this factor into consideration. The value they paid is equally calculated upon the yield of the property, minus this Rs. 2—8—0 proposed to be charged on an acre.

Mr. C. A. Kunjunni Raja.—How does this rate compare with the prevailing rate on the adjoining areas?

Mr. T. M. Krishna Menon.—I have not made a comparison. The highest rate in Chittur is Rs. 2 under the Settlement. There are 8 tharams from two annas to Rs. 2.

Mr. A. Eachara Menon.—The reason adduced by the leader of the House is that we had due knowledge regarding the assessment of the areas. But we know that there is the rule that nobody should commit suicide. Yet we find some doing it.

Mr. T. M. Krishna Menon.—He must be punished for it.

Mr. A. Eachara Menon.—The idea of disafforesting lands and assigning them to the subjects originated from His Highness the Maharaja; and His Highness the Maharaja never thought that His Highness' loyal subjects should be meted out with a treatment like this. These officers who are appointed by His Highness for looking after the conveniences of His Highness' subjects do these harms to them. We never thought that this would be the effect of these assignments on us and further these lands were taken away from us before for nothing. We were left without an inch of lands for the grazing of cattle. We went in for the land to provide for that want. We do not get anything by way of return from these lands at all. Is it very creditable to elude the poor people like this and take away from them as much as they can get from the land and something more which they have to find out from elsewhere? I

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hope the Government will consider these points and redress the grievances. I press the motion.

The resolution was put to the vote of the House and carried.

9. Cartable Bridge between Kumbalanghi and Palliviruthi.

The following resolution was not moved and hence it was considered withdrawn.

Mr. K. J. Antony.—"This Council do recommend to the Government that immediate steps be taken to construct a cartable bridge over the backwaters between Kumbalanghi and Pallivirutti so as to afford better and safer means of communication to the people of those localities."

10. Ferry between Ernakulam and Cochin.

Mr K. P. Kannan Nayar.—The resolution standing in my name is as follows:—

"Whereas great inconvenience is experienced by the travelling public in crossing the ferry between Ernakulam and Cochin on account of the very round-about and sometimes risky route the boats have to take at present, this Council recommends to the Government that immediate steps be taken to remove the said inconvenience."

In commending this resolution to the acceptance of this House, I don't think I need make any speech, because this inconvenience was brought to the notice of this House on several occasions and during the last Budget Session, if I remember right, the Government promised to take up the matter seriously and do something very urgently itself. It is only because I don't find anything tangible done that I wanted to press upon Government once more this inconvenience.

Mr. A. B. Salem.—I beg to second this resolution and in doing so, I beg only to say that it is a very great necessity, for children are crossing and coming to the school, and women are coming over the ferry. Delicate women have to be brought and so, in all these cases they are very much afraid and they get nervous when they come to the mouth of the harbour and the waves make the boats shake and toss. Therefore, a safe channel has been insisted upon for the last 10 years and beyond the stage of discussion it has not gone through. That is the complaint. The discussion of providing a safe channel has not ended. Propositions are brought down and scrapped. Provisions are made and scrapped and therefore, it has become a very imminent necessity. We hope that before the monsoon sets in something will be done to effect a safe passage between Ernakulam and Cochin. A suggestion has been made that a boat may run from Ernakulam to Venduruthi reclamation and another from Venduruthi to Cochin. If facilities are provided to the travelling public we have no objection. But something should be done.

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